(c) whether it is also a fact that some organisation has urged Government to strongly take up the issue with European Union Commission for granting exemption ; and

(d) if so, what action Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The 15% tariff however, is not a new tax but the existing MFN (Most Favoured Nation) rate which applies to all countries exporting flowers to EU except least developed countries and those with whom special preferential bilateral Agreements exist.

(c) and (d) Government have received representations from exporters from time to time pressing for waiver of 15% tariff being imposed by the EU. Government's proposal for improvement in the EU's Generalised System of Preferences have been formally conveyed which includes a plea for duty reduction to Zero in the case of cut flowers. These suggestions were reiterated in the course of Indo-EU Joint Commission meeting held in October, 1994.

Imposing Social Clause Linkage Under GATT

781. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU : Will the Minister of COMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India and China have agreed to oppose any social clause linkage in international trade under GATT or other wise;

(b) if so, the details in this regard ; and

(c) what precise steps or efforts have been made or are being made by the developed countries to bring about such linkage in international trade ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) The social clause is not under consideration in GATT at present. China is not a member of GATT.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In the run-up to the Marrakesh Ministerial meeting in April,1994 there were attempts by some developed countries, particularly France and the US to place on the agenda of the World Trade Organisation a consideration of the link between international trade and labour standards. This was resisted by a number of developing countries and some developed countries and the issue could not get inscribed on the agenda of the World Trade Organisation. Discussions are presently being held in the ILO. India, China and a number of other developing and some developed countries are opposed to linking international trade with labour standards.

Bonded labour in various states of the country

782. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of bonded labour identified in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh Madhya Pradesh and Bihar during the last three years ;

(b) the steps taken by Government for their rehabilitation ; and

(c) the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) The number of bonded labourers identified in Orissa, Andhra Praesh,